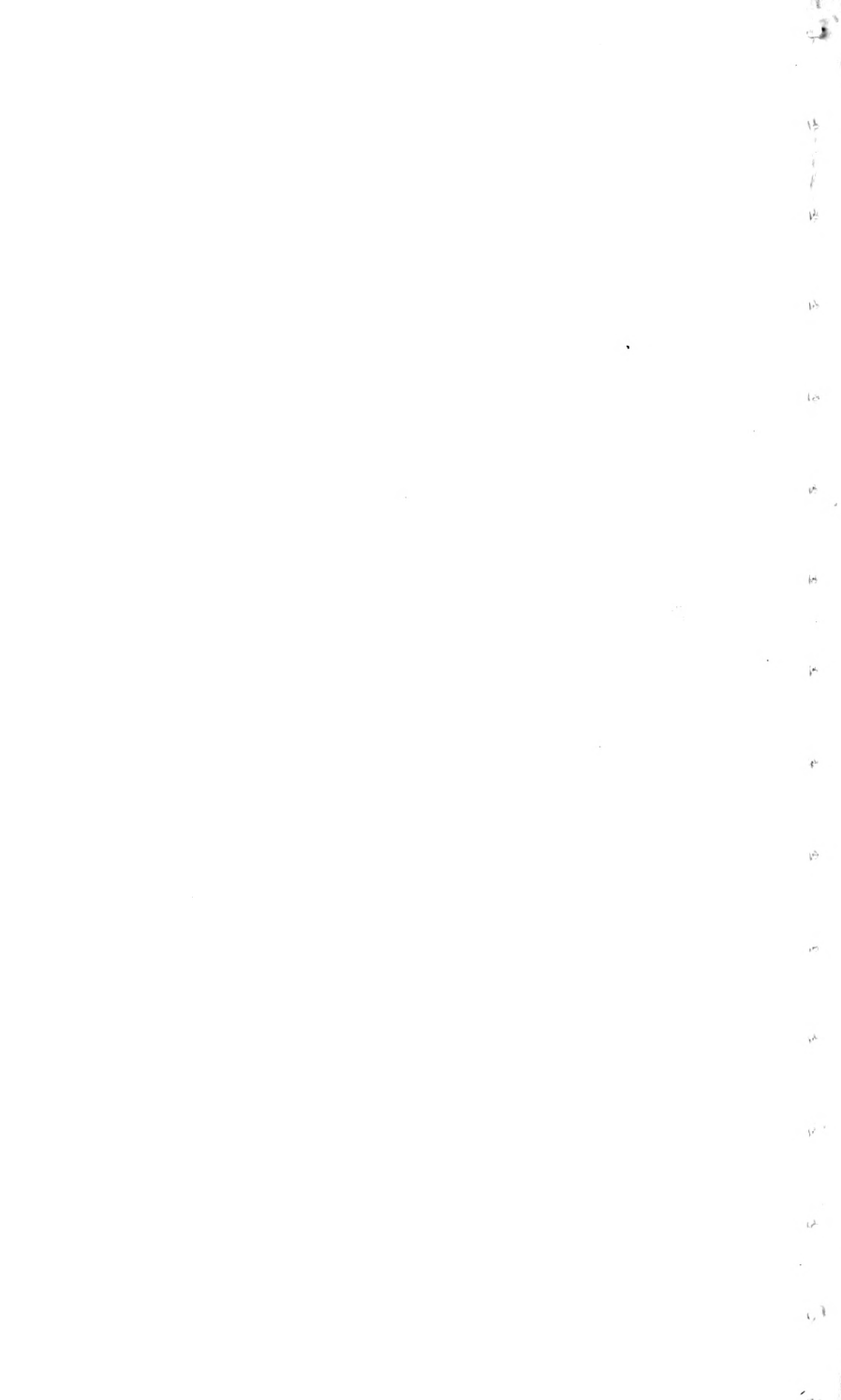


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APPEAL

OF THE

POTTOWATOMIE NATION OF INDIANS

TO THE

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

Many years ago it became evident to us that, while we had faithfully performed the stipulations of every treaty we had made with the United States for half a century, the United States had not done so; and that a large amount of money was due us. Several delegations of our people came on to Washington to have this matter examined, and to get the money which we were entitled to receive; but they could get no examination made, and could get no money.

Finally, in the year 1861, the Congress of the United States passed a law which required the Secretary of the Interior to examine our treaties and our accounts, and find out how much money was due to our people. This was the first step toward doing us justice.

The Secretary of the Interior, because this law required him to do so, made the examination. He called upon the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and upon the Secretary of the Treasury, to investigate the whole matter. The investigation was made, and a full report of it was sent to the Secretary of the Interior. The Secretary examined it, and, finding it was correct, sent it to Congress, and recommended that the amount found due us should be paid. Then a Committee of the House of Representatives examined it, and, thinking there might be a mistake about the matter, the Committee went to the Indian Office and looked over all the papers; but they found there was no mistake. They then made a report to the House of Representatives that it was all right, and asked the House to appropriate money to pay us. But some members of the House, who had not examined the matter, said it was not right; that it was too old a claim; that it was too much money to pay; and that, a long while ago, we were at war

with the United States: and, as only a few members of the House knew it was right, the rest would not give us any money.

We came again, and asked another Congress to give us the money; but they were busy, and did not look at our case at all.

We now come once more, and ask for the money.

We cannot, ourselves, look at all our accounts, and see how much money we ought to have. The United States Government is our guardian, and we must trust to our guardian to do what is right for us.

All the officers of the Government who know, or can know anything about our accounts, say there is due to us the sum of \$160,540.48, beside 11,000 pounds of tobacco, 567 pounds of iron, 855 pounds of steel, and 672 barrels of salt. We think, if all our accounts and all our treaties could be examined, there would be more money than this found due us. But the Commissioner of Indian Affairs says, in his report to the Secretary of the Interior, that, although our receipts for moneys due us before 1819 cannot be found, we have *probably* received all we were entitled to up to that time, "owing to the part we took in the war of 1812."

We do not wish to say that the Commissioner was not right when he said this. We do not wish to go back of 1819, because some of our receipts may have been lost or burnt up. We admit that we have been paid up to 1819. But we wish to speak of the reason given by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for not allowing us to go back of that time—which is that our people fought against the United States in the war of 1812.

We admit that we did. White men from Canada came and told us lies, and gave us presents. They made us believe that they were our friends, and that the United States were our enemies; and some, but not all, of our people fought against you. **76 6.3.6.3.**

But afterwards we made peace; and, for more than fifty years, no one of our people has lifted his hand against a white man. We have not only been at peace with the United States ever since, but, when wicked men tried to break up your Government, our young men went into your army and fought for you. And before that time, our young men fought for you in the Sac and Fox War. This was over a quarter of a century ago. **PD 74-7** The white men who fought in that war were long ago rewarded with land. They have chosen their land—rich and beautiful as any in the world—all around our reservation.

9 What has been our reward? Nothing! **SD**

Besides, when we made peace with you, in 1815, it was agreed, in the first article of our treaty, that "every injury or act of hostility by one or either of the contracting parties against the other, shall be mutually forgiven and forgot." You will not, then, tell us you will not pay us what is due under treaties made since, because of what we did before that treaty? This would not be *forgiving*, much less *forgelling*.

Therefore, while we claim nothing prior to the year 1819, we think it is unjust to bring up what we did before that time as a reason for not giving us what has become justly due us since.

Look over the treaties under which we claim this amount, and you will find that we have by them given you millions of acres of the best lands in the country; and that, again and again, we have been removed from our rich hunting grounds, our fertile fields, and our pleasant homes. Lands have been given to us, and taken away again. Under the treaty of 1846, we bought the lands where we now live, and they were guaranteed to us as "a home forever." But even now you are asking us to go away and leave them—to go to a new and strange country, buy other lands, and begin again.

In the treaty of 1846, too, you gave us "promise of all proper care and parental protection." Yet you have made our lands a highway. Multitudes of your people have been crossing our reservation ever since we went upon it. They have taken our horses and cattle; they have destroyed our fences and crops, and cut down our timber; and in no way has your "care and parental protection" been extended to us. We have borne it all patiently; and, while bearing it, we have given you "assurances of our fidelity and friendship" by shedding our blood to save your country.

As to our claim being an old one, and a large one, we have only to say, that this is not our fault. It is not a bounty, nor a charity, that we claim. We only ask what you have promised to give us. We have not, as we said, kept the run of our accounts. This we left entirely to the United States. We could not tell whether they were kept right or not. We thought they were not, and asked you to have them examined. You ordered this to be done. All the officers who could know anything about our accounts examined them; and they all reported that we had not got the money and goods which were promised us by our treaties.

What more could we do? What more can we do now? We appeal to you simply for justice. It is in your power, and yours alone,

to answer our appeal. If we fail before you, we must submit. We must then go back to our people and tell them that the Congress of the United States will not give us the money which is admitted to be due us; that they will not fulfill the solemn promises of the Government; that, although a few hours' revenue of this great country would keep its plighted faith to us, we cannot get it.

JOSEPH BOURASSA,

B. H. BERTRAND,

ANTHONY NAVARRE,

Delegates of the Pottowatomie Nation.





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